

VZCZCXRO6564
PP RUEHBI
DE RUEHLM #1603 2751321
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 021321Z OCT 06
FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4370
INFO RUEHK/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 9457
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 6357
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 4402
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 3208
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 9997
RUEHN/AMEMBASSY OSLO 3299
RUEHSM/AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM 0386
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2378
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 6914
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 4759
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1380

C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 001603

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/02/2016

TAGS: PREL PTER PHUM PREF MOPS CE

SUBJECT: SRI LANKA: GSL SETS PUBLIC CONDITIONS FOR TALKS
BUT TELLS NORWEGIANS PRIVATELY TO IGNORE THEM; SECURITY
FORCES THWART LTTE ATTACK IN BATTICALOA; INGOS TARGETED IN
JAFFNA

REF: COLOMBO 1597 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Ambassador Robert O. Blake for reasons 1.4(b,d).

Government Announces Conditions for Talks, Then Recants

¶1. (U) The Government of Sri Lanka (GSL) announced three conditions to return to peace talks with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), government and independent press reported on October 1. Defense spokesperson Keheliya Rambukwella told the Sunday Times that the three pre-conditions were that: (1) the LTTE should provide a specific time frame to resume talks, (2) the LTTE should assure the international community and the Co-chairs that it will not use sea routes to smuggle arms into Sri Lanka, and (3) the LTTE should commit not to commit any acts of violence during the period of the peace talks. However, when chief Norwegian Facilitator Jon Hanssen-Bauer met with GSL officials on Monday, October 2, the GSL told him to disregard the announcement and that there would be no GSL preconditions. (Septel on Tuesday will provide Hanssen-Bauer readout.)

Jaffna

¶2. (C) On Friday morning, September 29, a local Tamil deminer from the U.S.-funded HALO Trust was shot in the face on his way to work. The only witness, a young girl, said that the two gunmen on a motorbike wore civilian clothes. HALO Program director Stephen Pritchard said the deminer's brother had been a member of the LTTE and was similarly murdered several years ago. Later the same morning, a grenade was thrown into the ICRC compound in Jaffna. Pritchard, who inspected the site of the explosion, told poloff, "The grenade was thrown into an area of the compound in which it was meant to be a message rather than to injure anyone." Meanwhile, the media reported that three Security Task Force (STF) troopers and one Sinhalese youth were killed in a claymore mine attack in the northern government-controlled town of Vavuniya, at the base of the LTTE-controlled Vanni.

Batticaloa

¶3. (U) The Media Center for National Security (MCNS) reported that on September 30, STF troopers killed 15 LTTE cadres when they tried to attack a police post at Pullumalai, Batticaloa. The STF then recovered rifles, magazines, communication sets and 19 anti-personnel mines from the bodies of the cadres.

BLAKE